

# Florida Bills Could Force Taxpayers To Fund Harmful Psychiatric Services for First Responders

*Opponents say the cost of removing the requirement that a physical injury accompany a mental injury in order to determine benefits would be cost prohibitive.*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Current Florida statutes require that there be clear and convincing evidence of mental or nervous injury to determine benefits under the state's workers' compensation law for Florida's first responders.

However, recent bills calling for revisions to the standard for demonstrating these types of injuries has landed on the 2018 session agenda for Tallahassee legislators' vote and these changes could potentially endanger first responders through the increased prescription of [psychiatric drugs](#).



If passed, these bills would remove the requirement that a physical injury accompany a mental or nervous injury in order to determine benefits for Florida's law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics. Supporters of the change cite the number of firefighters who commit [suicide](#) each year as the reason the change needs to be made, while opponents state that the cost to taxpayers is prohibitive.

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*Diane Stein, President CCHR Florida*

While everyone agrees that first responders need help, easier state-funded access to psychiatric services will most likely simply result in higher prescription rates and, unfortunately, more prescription drug-related deaths. According to the most

recent Medical Examiners Report published in November 2017, prescription drugs, including psychiatric drugs, continued to be found more often than illicit drugs, both as the cause of death and present at death, accounting for 61% of all drug occurrences in the report. The drug that caused the most deaths was cocaine followed closely by [benzodiazepines](#), which are a class of psychiatric drugs used to treat depression and anxiety. Benzodiazepines have been linked to confusion, irritability, aggression, and suicide.

“Although the intention of these bills may seem noble at first glance, greater access to taxpayer-

funded psychiatric services through workers' compensation is not the answer," stated Diane Stein, President of the Florida Chapter of the Citizens Commission on Human Rights. "Instead, our first responders deserve better — they deserve real help and easier access to successful alternative treatments."

About CCHR: The Citizens Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) of Florida, a non-profit mental health watchdog that exposes human rights violations and is dedicated to the protection of children, was initially established by the Church of Scientology and renowned psychiatrist Dr. Thomas Szasz in 1969, with the mission to eradicate abuses committed under the guise of mental health and enact patient and consumer protections. It was L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology, who brought the terror of psychiatric imprisonment to the notice of the world. In March 1969, he said, "Thousands and thousands are seized without process of law, every week, over the 'free world' tortured, castrated, killed. All in the name of 'mental health.'" For more information on the dangers of psychiatric drugs, please call 727-442-8820 or visit [www.cchrflorida.org](http://www.cchrflorida.org).

Sources:

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